

# Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

August 26, 2020

The Honorable Ralph DLG. Torres  
Governor  
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands  
Saipan, MP 96950

Greetings, Governor Torres:

Although I am grateful that you began distributing Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation on July 17 and that, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, \$119,770,584 has now been released, I remain concerned by the slow pace of getting this federal money to those out of work, some for months now, and in dire need of assistance. The Department of Labor informed me this week that over half of the applications you have received for PUA and FPUC have not been processed. The exact figures are 8,312 applications received, 4,730 still waiting for action.

As you might imagine, the congressional office continues to receive numerous requests for help from some of those thousands who are waiting. These constituents typically tell us they are unable to reach the Commonwealth's Department of Labor by phone and, often, that they are desperate for the \$945 weekly benefits that Congress made available in the CARES Act on March 27. Tomorrow marks the fifth month since the CARES Act was signed into law.

This situation is even more difficult to explain, knowing that the CARES Act also provided your government with over \$2 million to pay for staff to process the applications and that you have not put all that money to use.

Governor, I understand the unprecedented health emergency and economic crisis you face, as a result of the coronavirus, takes all your attention. But I ask that you do everything you can to get federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation into the pockets of the thousands of people who qualify and have not yet been paid. Please process their applications and distribute the funding. People cannot wait any longer.

Sincerely,



GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLÁN  
Member of Congress